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ABSTRACT

This booklet examines one of the most tragic and dangerous paradoxes facing the nations of the world at the end of the 20th century: hunger amid plenty. Even though the world does not lack for food, the problem lies in the distribution and power of ownership. There are serious moral, economic and political reasons why the U.S. in particular should concern itself actively with the problem of world hunger. Chapters include: (1) "The Paradox of World Hunger"; (2) "Combating Hunger at the National Level"; (3) "Combating Hunger at the Human Level: Food and Jobs for the Poor"; (4) "World Hunger and U.S. Leadership"; and (5) "Six Priorities for U.S. Action." Monographs in FPA's Headline Series are published approximately four times a year and are intended as a resource for teachers and students in the foreign policy area. Each monograph: is about a world area or topic; is written by a noted scholar; is brief (usually 64 pages); is written to be highly readable; and includes basic background, maps, charts, discussion guides, and suggested reading. (EH)

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HEADLINE SERIES 252

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World Hunger

A Challenge to American Policy

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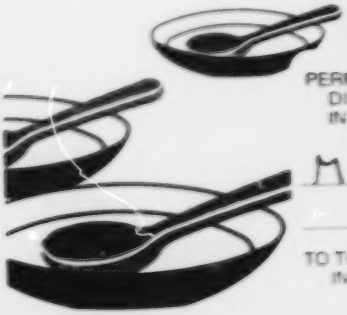

by
Sol M. Linowitz
Chairman, Presidential Commission on World Hunger

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World Hunger: A Challenge to American Policy

by Sol M. Linowitz
Chairman, Presidential Commission
on World Hunger

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1

The Paradox of World Hunger

Hunger amid plenty: that, in three words, is one of the most tragic and dangerous paradoxes facing the nations of the world in these final decades of the 20th century.

On the one hand, the world does not lack for food. The annual grain production of the world, about 1.5 billion tons, is enough to provide two pounds a day—an adequate amount—for every man, woman and child on earth. Thus, on a global basis, there is no crisis of food supply. Yet at least half a billion people—one out of eight human beings—do daily battle with hunger. (Some estimates go much higher. The World Bank has estimated that over 1 billion people—a quarter of the human race—are chronically undernourished.) More than half these hungry people are children under five, who will bear all their lives the physical and mental scars of this early deprivation.

The plight of these hungry hundreds of millions is not only

This is one of a number of issues of the **HEADLINE** *Series, dealing with international topics of special humanistic significance, whose publication in the period 1980-83 is being supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

a human tragedy in itself; it is also a heavy weight on the hopes of all nations for a better world. It seriously hampers the efforts of low-income nations to develop their economies and to contribute to the world economy. It gives rise to civil and international conflict and to vast movements of refugees and migrants. These massive dislocations, in turn, further compound the problems of hunger.

How did this situation come to be? What are its implications for the future? What can be done about it, particularly by the United States?

Such questions are by no means new to U.S. policy-makers or to concerned citizens, yet they have seldom received the attention they require either from top-level policy-makers or from the general public. It was to help explore these questions and to focus greater public and official attention on them that President Jimmy Carter appointed in 1978 a Presidential Commission on World Hunger, consisting of 20 concerned citizens, including four members of Congress.* Briefly stated, our instructions were to study the causes of hunger, both in this country and abroad; to evaluate policies and programs, especially those of the United States, that bear on the problem; to make recommendations as to how the U.S. policies and programs could be improved; and—not least important—"to carry out educational and other activities" so that the public may better understand the problem and what can be done about it.

In such a diverse group, including eminent scientists, public officials, and leading citizens from a variety of walks of life, complete unity of views could never be expected; yet when our report was submitted in March 1980, unity was in fact achieved on certain fundamentals. Most important of these was the central recommendation *"that the United States make the elimination of hunger the primary focus of its relationships with the developing countries, beginning with the decade of the 1980s."*

I am not going to try here to reflect all the insights and ideas

**The names of the Commission members and the text of the recommendations in the full report are printed in Appendixes I and II, pages 52-59.*

contained in the Commission's 250-page report—still less to speak for all of the Commission members. Rather, my intention is to share with other concerned citizens and students some of what I as the Commission's chairman have learned about this problem, and to suggest some next steps which I believe the United States can and must take without delay to deal with it.

An Unrecognized Challenge for Americans

There are moral, economic and political reasons why the United States in particular should concern itself actively with the problem of world hunger.

▶We are a world power and, consequently, we have the world responsibilities that go with such power. Any problem that so deeply affects the destinies of a large proportion of the nations of the earth cannot fail to affect the American people.

▶As the world's leading producer, processor and exporter of food, we have special capabilities to help alleviate hunger.

▶We have a fundamental interest in the stability and prosperity of other nations, including the developing world. Hungry nations are unlikely to be politically stable and certainly cannot be attractive markets for American goods or American investment. Instead, many of them are becoming points of departure for hunger-driven migrants seeking haven, legally or otherwise, in the United States and other industrialized countries.

▶Finally, above and beyond such elements of political or commercial self-interest, there is a strong tradition of American altruism and generosity which no cynic can deny. The response of millions of Americans to famines and to the plight of refugees from war and other disasters abroad in recent times—in Cambodia, Bangladesh, Central America, Biafra, the African Sahel and elsewhere—vividly demonstrates that this tradition is alive and well.

However, neither American altruism nor American self-interest can be expected to respond to a problem that most of us scarcely even perceive. As the Presidential Commission on World Hunger put it, "The major world hunger problem is not famine or starvation, but the less dramatic one of chronic undernutri-

The major world hunger problem is chronic undernutrition. Pictured is a malnourished child in Bangladesh.

Agency for International Development

tion." The daily hunger of a family of landless laborers in Central America, the Indian subcontinent or East Africa is not a massive disaster, visible to Americans thousands of miles away. Nevertheless, it is a personal disaster to those who suffer it. And, when multiplied by hundreds of millions and translated into political and economic terms, it can become a very great disaster for the world. I believe that when the American people are fully informed of the nature and menace of world hunger and of the steps needed to combat it—even though these steps require a long-term commitment rather than a simple emergency response—that commitment will be made.

Hunger and Poverty

If the world produces enough food for all its people, why do hunger and malnutrition exist, afflicting an eighth or more of

the world's people in this age of abundance? Much of the answer is concentrated in one word: poverty. The Presidential Commission on World Hunger concluded that hunger is not primarily a food production problem but a poverty problem. Producing adequate world (or even national) food supplies, on the one hand, and overcoming hunger, on the other, are two quite different although closely related goals. The first makes possible —but does not guarantee—the second. Once the food is available, people must be able to buy it. To do this, they need jobs that provide adequate income, and basic foods must be priced at levels that even the lowest-income citizen can afford.

This basic linkage between hunger and poverty is evidenced in every corner of the earth, including the United States. Pursuant to its mandate, the Presidential Commission on World Hunger made a thorough study of the persistent problems of hunger and malnutrition not only abroad but also among the American groups most affected, and offered important recommendations to alleviate their plight. My subject in this discussion, however, is the larger challenge of hunger and poverty in the developing nations of the world, which include the vast majority of the world's poor—and, consequently, of the world's hungry.

The task of overcoming poverty and hunger is complex and many-faceted. But it is possible to see through the complexities and to focus on certain fundamentals. To begin with, it is clear that poverty, the greatest obstacle to good nutrition, can only be overcome on the necessary scale by a broad process of equitable economic development. But this development process, already under way, will take many years, perhaps even generations—and those who are hungry cannot wait. Not only does hunger mean personal suffering and shortened and stunted lives for those afflicted by it; it also means an enfeebled work force—and is thus, for many nations, an obstacle to the economic development that can alone free them from both hunger and poverty. Hunger and poverty are, indeed, close companions, reinforcing each other.

It follows that improved nutrition for the poor of the devel-

oping world must not be looked on simply as a future *result* of development. On the contrary, efforts to relieve hunger and malnutrition among critical target groups should be a continuing part of every national development program, right now. This goal must be consciously sought by political leaders and development planners as a *near-term* objective, not only as a matter of simple compassion but also as a matter of practical necessity.

In these pages, therefore, I will be discussing two interrelated strategies, both of them essential to the conquest of hunger. One is the long-term strategy of economic and social development—the conquest of individual and national poverty. The other is the near-term strategy of alleviating the hunger of those who still remain poor. Both strategies, to be effective, require international cooperation—including the cooperation of the United States.

These, briefly stated, are the fundamental concepts that underlie the report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger. They are by no means new, but unfortunately they are still not widely enough understood, nor adequately reflected in the existing endeavors of the American people and their government to combat world hunger. Neither U.S. nor global energies and resources are yet being mobilized for this great effort with the urgency and the clear sense of purpose that the situation demands.

Dangers and Opportunities

The Chinese ideogram for crisis is composed of two separate symbols, one signifying danger, the other, opportunity. There is much of both in the present critical world hunger situation.

The danger is that human suffering, far from being alleviated, will increase—not only from hunger and its biological consequences but also from spreading political violence as growing populations compete for limited food supplies. This danger can materialize in any of three ways.

▶First, expanding populations and rising living standards, exerting steadily growing pressure on limited resources of land, water, and the other factors of food production, may cause world

food supply to lag further and further behind world demand. This lag occurs especially in years when one or more of the major food-producing nations experience crop failures. Among the results, already evident in many countries in recent years, are sharply inflated food prices, food riots and other evidences of social turmoil.

▶Second, short-term food needs may be met (in fact, are already being met) at the expense of precious topsoil, water supply, forest cover and ecological balance among living species—the natural resource base on which food production in future generations will depend. Sooner or later, if this short-sighted course is not changed, the tragic results in hunger and human conflict will be just as great as in the first case.

▶Finally, even if the first two pitfalls are avoided, it is all too possible that the world's food budget will *increasingly* be balanced by leaving out the poor. This outcome—present-day reality writ even larger, in effect—would forestall a world *food* crisis, but only in the paradoxical context of a deepening world *hunger* crisis which would pose major political, economic and social dangers of its own. We are in a period of continued rapid population growth in the developing countries and of sluggish economic growth worldwide. In such a situation increasing millions may find themselves mired in perpetual malnutrition simply because they cannot pay for food. Supply and demand may be in balance but, without money, their hunger does not count as demand. Such a state of affairs, unconscionable in itself, would bring further evils in its train—an undermining of long-range development efforts and a rise in political and social turmoil.

Throughout history, food shortages and rising food prices have been a major cause of political instability—triggering riots and strikes, providing a unifying focus for opposition to established political systems, and ultimately causing governments to fall. The threat of hunger has also been a frequent source of international conflict, inciting wars of territorial expansion and propelling desperate people to migrate en masse across national borders.

Hunger and poverty are the main impulses, in fact, behind

the growing tide of migration, both legal and illegal, from Mexico and the Caribbean area to the United States. This historic movement of populations has its constructive aspects as long as it remains within the absorptive capacity of the receiving countries. But it also contains ominous implications for future conflict. In the long run, the solution is not for the rich countries to import poverty but for the developing countries, with appropriate help, to overcome it on their own ground.

Modern communications and steadily rising expectations will make hunger an even more potent force for disruption in years to come. Hunger is increasingly perceived as both symptom and symbol of the fundamental economic disorders that prevail within and among the nations of the world. In the eyes of many people, the continued persistence of malnutrition "proves" that the rich are indifferent to the plight of the poor. And all the while, as angry witnesses debate cause and effect, blame and responsibility, hunger relentlessly strengthens the hold of poverty on the poor: stunting their physical and mental development, making them less productive and more susceptible to disease, and undermining their ability to improve their own lives.

Thus, although the hunger crisis still exacts its most immediate and visible toll from the poor themselves, its effects are not confined to poor people or even to poor countries. As the Commission's report forthrightly states, "the most potentially explosive force in the world today is the frustrated desire of poor people to obtain a decent standard of living. The anger, despair and often hatred that result represent real and persistent threats to international order." And unlike traditional threats to peace, this kind cannot be rebutted by the force of arms.

Alongside these dangers, however, lie unsurpassed opportunities. Major progress in building a world without hunger—and without the deep poverty which gives rise to hunger—would help to fulfill one of mankind's most ancient and universal aspirations. It would unleash new energies and forge new bonds of cooperation among nations and individuals, strengthening the prospects for resolving additional issues on the global agenda—controlling pollution, developing the resources of the

sea, harnessing new energy sources, fostering education, science and the arts, enhancing the quality of community life in the cities, towns and villages of the world. And by reducing the causes of conflict and thus increasing both personal and national security, the elimination of hunger would improve the outlook for reducing the burden of armaments and building a peaceful world order among nations.

But—it is natural to ask—is such an ambitious goal realistically attainable? Does it deserve a place in American national policy along with such widely accepted goals as reinvigoration of our national economy and the strengthening of our military defense? To both questions my answer is yes. In fact, the conquest of world hunger should be seen not as being in competition with these necessary goals but as an essential complement to them. The future health of the U.S. economy depends in great measure on the development and well-being of "third-world" countries, which are our fastest-growing export markets. And our military strength, vitally important though it is, is only one of the essential elements we need to assure our national security. To rid the world of hunger and the abject poverty that underlies it—even to approach that goal—would be a giant step toward ending the social conflict, insecurity and dangerous competition in armaments that pose the most fundamental threats to world order and to our own national security. These are evils which military strength alone is powerless to remedy.

I am further convinced that the substantial alleviation of world hunger is indeed an attainable goal—provided that governments in both developed and developing countries recognize its necessity and give it the long-term priority it requires. In this respect the government and people of the United States must contribute their share of the money and leadership required. Hunger is not inevitable. On the contrary, as my fellow commissioners and I declared in our report: ". . . the outcome of the war on hunger, by the year 2000 and beyond, will be determined not by forces beyond human control, but by decisions and actions well within the capability of nations and people working individually and together."

2
Combating Hunger at the National Level

The food problem faced by developing countries must be seen at two levels: that of the nation and that of the individual. At the national level, inadequate food supply is a major obstacle to overall economic growth. At the level of individuals trapped in poverty, the result is direct, personal and concrete: hunger and all the human ills that go with it. Every less-developed country (LDC), in order to develop successfully over the long term, must deal effectively with the problem at both levels.

The Food-Population Balance

At the national level, the central fact is that food production in most developing countries has not kept up with increasing demand. In a period of accelerated economic development following independence, demand for food increased rapidly both because incomes and expectations—for all but the poorest peo-

ple—were rising, and because population was growing at unprecedented rates. Meanwhile, most national development plans tended to emphasize industrialization, while agriculture was—and, to a great extent, still is today—characterized either by antiquated technology and low productivity per acre, or by large, high-technology agro-industries employing relatively few people. An unfortunate result was a continuous migration of young people off the land, seeking—but not always finding—jobs in already overcrowded cities.

Statistics suggest the impact of these events on food supply. Between 1950 and 1975, food production in the developing countries as a whole—averaging the best cases with the worst—increased by over 2.5 percent a year, but *demand* for food in the same period increased by well over 3 percent a year. That difference may look small, but in compound-interest terms it means that demand grew substantially faster than production. Inevitably, developing countries began to balance their increasingly inadequate food budgets through increased imports from the United States and other surplus-food producers. Annual food imports by developing countries as a whole grew from about 20 million tons in 1960 to 50 million in 1975 and to almost 80 million in the period 1978-80. If present trends continue, according to estimates by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the developing countries' food imports by the year 2000 will reach an annual level of 175 million tons, and will account for 26 percent of food consumption in these countries.

This is not to suggest that every country should attempt self-sufficiency in food production. On the contrary, differences in natural endowments, as well as the need to compensate for crop failures, make an active international food trade an obvious necessity.

But the present *degree* of the developing countries' dependence on food imports—a dependence that will further increase unless action is taken to reverse it—poses dangers not only for the developing countries but for their suppliers as well. It puts an additional strain on the importing countries' limited foreign currency reserves, which are urgently needed to import equipment

and technology for development. It also puts developing countries at the mercy of uncertain world food prices, which can skyrocket in the event of a crop failure or sudden increases in agricultural costs—as food importers learned to their sorrow in the disastrous year 1974.

For the food-exporting countries, notably the United States, it means still more inflated food prices and, all too often, dangerous depletion of topsoil and other resources as farmland is exploited beyond safe limits.*

The task, therefore, is not to devise new ways by which the United States can feed the world but, rather, to enable other nations to feed themselves. Developing countries will have to achieve very large increases in their food production in the decades ahead. Much of this production, moreover, will be a high-cost and high-risk venture as prices of energy and other inputs rise, lower-quality land is brought into production and newly trained people tackle unfamiliar tasks. Great financial investments will be required to build transportation, irrigation and storage facilities; to train farmers, agronomists, nutritionists, extension agents and agricultural administrators; to strengthen basic and applied research in nutrition and tropical agriculture; to provide credit and crop insurance and to improve the quality of rural life.

Most developing nations simply do not have the capital to do this job on their own. The 43 "food priority countries" meeting the criteria of need laid down by the World Food Council (see facing table) will especially require grants and long-term, low-

**All these considerations are accentuated by the fact that two vast countries not classified as "developing"—the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, China—are also net food importers. Huge Soviet grain imports, even during the partial U.S. embargo following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, have been a major factor in world demand for grain and hence in the higher grain prices which all food-deficit countries must pay. The deep-seated inefficiency of Soviet agriculture makes it highly unlikely that this situation will soon change. An ultimate cure for this problem raises political issues beyond the scope of this discussion.*

FORTY-THREE 'FOOD PRIORITY COUNTRIES'

In 1976 the World Food Council, an organ of the UN, identified a list of 43 countries as "food priority countries." Its aim, the council said, was "to lend a sharper sense of direction to the overall effort to increase food production in the developing countries." In making up the list the council took into account such criteria as low per capita income (under $500 a year); size of the food deficit expected by 1985; extent of protein-calorie malnutrition; insufficient recent growth in food production; a serious balance of payments problem. All countries were judged to have a potential for rapidly and efficiently increasing food production and for wide distribution of the increase.

The 43 countries, which include over half the population of the developing nations (excluding China), are listed in three groups in order of the severity of their food problems.

Group I, extremely severe (8 countries):

Bangladesh, Mali, Upper Volta, North Yemen, South Yemen, Somalia, Tanzania, Niger

Group II, very severe (23 countries):

Afghanistan, Benin, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Kampuchea (Cambodia), Lesotho, Laos, Malawi, Mauritania, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Uganda

Group III, severe (12 countries):

Burma, Cameroon, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Philippines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan

Developing irrigation facilities is one key to increased food production. In Niger, a corner of the drought-stricken Sahel, drawing water for irrigation is still a slow, laborious and inefficient process.

Agency for International Development

interest loans on a far larger scale than current foreign aid budgets permit. The International Food Policy Research Institute has estimated that even if the developing nations can meet half of the capital costs and 80 percent of the recurring costs of agricultural development, the rest of the world will have to provide $12 billion each year (in 1975 dollars) during the decade of the 1980s. (For comparison, international assistance for the development of food and agriculture in all the developing nations in the year 1978 came to $5 billion.) Without external assistance of this magnitude, matching substantially increased agricultural investment by the developing nations themselves, it is most unlikely that food production in the developing world will begin to catch up with demand.

The costs are high, but, as we have seen, the future outlook for a peaceful and livable world depends in no small part on the outcome. And there are good reasons for confidence that, given the necessary investment help by the United States and other industrial nations, the job can be done:

▶It is precisely in the developing countries that the largest unexploited potential in land and water resources remains to be developed. According to U.S. agricultural experts, net food-importing countries like Sri Lanka, Honduras and Uganda have plenty of land and water resources to feed themselves; others, such as Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Kenya and the Sudan, could even reverse the flow and become net food exporters.

▶Contrary to a widespread myth, farmers—even small, poorly educated farmers in the most traditional societies—are not at all averse to agricultural innovation if they can be shown that it will bring them a better return. Where more productive technology is accompanied by adequate marketing systems, credit, fertilizer, seeds, and economic returns, small farmers are generally eager to modernize.

▶Increasingly, the governments of developing countries have come to realize that their early overemphasis on industrialization as the key to development was a mistake, and that agricultural and rural development are just as vital to economic development as is industrialization—in fact, that neither sector can develop fully without the other.

Food Reserves for Security

In addition to these efforts, one more thing is necessary if developing countries are to be able to balance their food budgets: food security. Food supply must not only be adequate; it must also be dependable. And since agriculture is inherently undependable because of the vagaries of the weather, it is as necessary today as it was in ancient times to anticipate bad crop years by maintaining food reserves. Such reserves have long been a standard feature of farm policy in all major food-producing countries, but in most developing countries food reserves are grossly inadequate or nonexistent. The primary exception among the de-

veloping nations is India, which recently established its own national food reserve.

Unfortunately, the size of internationally available food reserves in the food-surplus countries has been far too small in recent years to cushion the developing world against the effects of crop failures. This was dramatically demonstrated in the disastrous crop year of 1973-74, when world grain prices leapt upward and many developing countries experienced severe

Agency for International Development
by Kay Chernush

Farmers, even in the most traditional societies, are prepared to experiment with new ways to improve agricultural output. In the Dominican Republic, participants in a small-farmer training program listen attentively.

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hardship. It was in November 1974 that the UN convened a World Food Conference in Rome. The conference agreed, among other things, that both national and international reserves must be increased and that food-deficit countries in need should have access to them, where necessary below world market prices.

In this effort the United States, as the world's leading grain producer and grain exporter, must clearly take the lead. Thus far some important steps have been taken but much more remains to be done. Efforts within the International Wheat Council to agree on an international system for coordinating national grain reserve stocks have so far been unavailing. Meanwhile, the U.S. farmer-held wheat reserve created by act of Congress in 1977 stood in 1980 at less than 10 million tons, a level that the Presidential Commission on World Hunger called seriously inadequate. Most experts see a need for world wheat reserves of about 60-80 million tons, of which the United States would hold about 45 million.

Even if the size of reserves can be made more adequate as a cushion for world price fluctuations, the further problem exists of making reserve foods available to poor countries in emergencies. In response to this problem, Congress in December 1980 approved legislation creating a 4-million-ton Food Security Reserve to back up our food aid programs. This legislation also authorizes the release of 300,000 tons in any year for emergency food assistance to developing countries.

However, we still have a long way to go before the world has an international food reserve system adequate to the needs of the developing countries where, for the chronically undernourished, a sudden interruption of food supply can mean acute suffering.

Clearly, a new approach is needed. At this point, I believe the United States should move—on its own, or with the support of other producer nations—to support the creation and expansion of national food reserves within the developing countries. This approach would involve major shifts of policy for the United States and for the developing countries concerned. However, it seems to offer a more promising means of rapidly assuring food

security than the methods tried thus far. The United States can play a key role in this process by working directly with the countries concerned as well as with the FAO. Bilaterally, the U.S. Food for Peace program already provides some assistance for national food reserves; this should be expanded. In the FAO, this country should begin to contribute—as it has not yet done—to the Food Security Assistance Scheme, which offers financial and technical assistance to developing countries for the storing, handling and management of grain reserves.

3

Combating Hunger at the Human Level: Food and Jobs for the Poor

Unfortunately, as has already been noted, it cannot be assumed that if a country produces enough food for all its people the food will necessarily end up on the plates of the poor. On the contrary, where supply and demand are the determining forces, much of a country's food-producing capacity is likely to be devoted to high-value agricultural products such as coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, tobacco and cattle—to be consumed by those who can afford to buy them, at home or abroad, and who are already more than adequately fed. Or, for similar reasons, acreage may be used to produce fuel, fiber and other nonfood items. Also, potential food production from unused acreage or undeveloped fisheries will remain unrealized even while the poor go hungry, because there is no effective demand for it.

Such results are likely wherever economic decisions are made primarily in the interest of those whose wealth gives them influ-

ence in the marketplace and in the political arena. Some countries favor this approach as a matter of policy. Their priority is rapid national economic growth, which they see as a prerequisite for developing the *future* ability to finance desirable but costly social programs for the poor.

Too often, however, under such an approach the promised social improvements are indefinitely postponed, for the poor wield little political power or economic leverage with which to press their claims. Thus, year after year, economic growth continues but largely fails to "trickle down" to the poor. And wherever a severe inequality of incomes exists, the inequality is bound to be reflected in the distribution of food. The end result, aside from the suffering of the poor themselves, is a steady decline in social cohesion and political stability—and a tragic failure to develop the nation's human resources. As Robert S. McNamara, retiring president of the World Bank, reminded us in his *World Development Report, 1980:* "Growth is vital for poverty reduction, but it is not enough."

In real life, of course, the choice governments face is not a stark one between rapid growth and social equity. Rather it is one of how to achieve a judicious balance of difficult trade offs to which there is no perfect answer. It would be foolish to pretend that there are not other goals as legitimate and necessary for national survival as that of raising the living standards of the poor.

But this much all wise leaders of developing countries must realize. Hunger's effects—in crippled bodies and blighted lives, in the sapping of a nation's economic strength, in social unrest, conflict and violence—will eventually, if not relieved, be felt by the rich and powerful. Armed with this awareness, and encouraged by the cooperation of the United States and other developed nations, I believe these leaders will be prepared to put a larger share of their national energies to work to cure the hunger and poverty afflicting their own societies.

The actions that can be taken are of two kinds. One, which is short-range and relatively modest in its aim, acts directly to relieve hunger among the poor. The other approach is long-

range, slower and more costly, but, if successful, far more lasting in its effects: attacking hunger by attacking its deeper cause, poverty.

Assuring Food for the Poor: An Immediate Task

Overcoming poverty through development is a long-term business, but hunger exists *today*. It is itself a drag on development, and can even threaten political stability, not in the long run but right now. Programs designed specifically to alleviate hunger and malnutrition among the poor should therefore be made part and parcel of overall development efforts.

Special-feeding and food-subsidy programs for this purpose can go far toward eliminating hunger even before poverty itself has been vanquished. This is shown by the experience of the United States, where gross malnutrition and the diseases and deformities it causes were widespread in some areas through the early 1960s. These have been largely overcome by a combination of Federal food stamp and special-feeding programs. The cost is high—over $10 billion in 1979 alone—but the accomplishment has been remarkable. Nutritional disorders such as pellagra and rickets have been virtually eliminated. Infant mortality rates and clinical malnutrition have been dramatically reduced. This U.S. record demonstrates that major nutritional gains can be attained for those groups who are still too poor to meet their own nutritional needs without help.

On a smaller scale, "nutrition interventions" to improve the diets of the poor form part of the development effort in many developing countries, and are supported by the aid programs of the United States and other countries. The most conspicuous case is Egypt, which devotes 21 percent of its national budget to subsidizing the prices of food for the poor, chiefly those in urban areas, and has in fact found it politically chancy to reduce the subsidies. An especially instructive case is that of Sri Lanka, which subsidized food for the poorest fifth of its population in the early 1970s and substantially lowered its death rate by doing so—until rising world prices in 1974 forced a reduction in the program, whereupon the death rate went up again.

Other forms of nutrition intervention include supplementary feeding programs for particularly vulnerable groups such as schoolchildren and pregnant or nursing women, which are supported by the U.S. Food for Peace program; nutrition education, often useful to promote breast-feeding of infants and to correct traditional practices or beliefs which lead to poor nutrition; and food fortification programs, using vitamins and other substances to attack specific ailments such as iron-deficiency anemia, Vitamin A deficiency and goiter. Many American voluntary agencies do valuable work in such programs, alongside the agencies of the UN, the United States and other donor countries. Although

Supplementary feeding for the poor is a necessary but inadequate response to malnutrition rooted in poverty. A mother and son at a Red Cross feeding center in Dacca, Bangladesh.

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these efforts fall far short of known needs, especially in reaching the poorest people, their value is beyond dispute. They are effective both in direct human terms and as a contribution to development, since only a person who is healthy and well nourished can do productive work. But it is also clear that limited nutrition programs cannot by themselves be a permanent solution to the problems of hunger.

Conquering Hunger by Conquering Poverty

Thus we come back again to the root problem of poverty—of bringing the poor into the mainstream of economic development so that they can afford to buy enough food and other essentials of life. That can be done only if a nation can produce its goods, including its food supply, by methods that generate jobs and incomes for the poor—the subsistence farmers, landless laborers and armies of unemployed and underemployed who crowd the cities and slums of the developing world. These are the people who bear the heaviest burden of hunger and malnutrition.

It follows that any sound development strategy must include ways to increase the effective demand for food by raising the purchasing power of now-impoverished people. Creating jobs and teaching skills so that poor people can pay for food is just as important as showing farmers how to increase their yields. Indeed, these two aspects of development must go hand in hand.

In the farming sector, it is possible to serve both purposes at once by strengthening the position of small farmers. This is particularly true in the poorest countries, where up to 80 percent of the people are engaged in subsistence agriculture, growing barely enough food to feed themselves. Enabling a subsistence farmer and his family to raise their productivity means that they cannot only feed themselves better but can also earn money by producing a cash crop for the market. Thus they add both to the national food supply and to the effective demand for food and other goods. The same is true every time a farm job is created for one of the millions of landless rural laborers who are chronically unemployed and who form the largest single category of the world's severely malnourished population.

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Enabling small farmers to raise their productivity helps the farmer earn more money and increases the national food supply. In Thailand, the Ministry of Agriculture helps farmers grow fish in rice paddies.

But the task of creating enough jobs must extend far beyond the farming sector. It must include manufacturing and service occupations, and must reach not only the rural but also the masses of urban unemployed. Until unemployed and underemployed people in both city and countryside are put to work, no permanent solution for the problem of hunger—or of national underdevelopment—will have been found.

This job-creating task facing development planners is massive indeed. It requires large new investments in education and training. It also means a shift in thinking toward more labor-intensive technologies, employing larger numbers of workers even if at a lower average productivity than more highly automated tech-

nologies would achieve. It requires a balanced development strategy that will promote mutually reinforcing growth in the rural and urban sectors, each producing for and buying from the other. And, at the international level, it requires a changed division of labor and different patterns of trade, so that developing countries can have access to foreign markets for the labor-intensive products in which they enjoy a comparative advantage.

These are some of the elements in a development strategy that can set poor nations on the road to overcoming not only their national underdevelopment but also the poverty and hunger of their people. Extraordinary efforts will be required by all concerned. Governments in developing countries must, among other things, exert political leadership and administrative skill to carry out effective land-reform programs where both large landholdings and human resources are underemployed. And the developed countries, including the United States, must go substantially further in providing the necessary capital, technology and markets.

For many developing countries, it is not going to be easy in the years just ahead to take the necessary steps. Widespread unemployment in the poor nations will be especially hard to overcome after the global economic setbacks of the 1970s. The dramatic upsurge in oil prices since 1973 has been compounded by recession, inflation and unemployment even in the industrialized nations—and many analysts foresee even harsher economic conditions for the early 1980s. Not surprisingly, impoverished nations with weak political systems and shaky economies are most vulnerable to these economic pressures. Caught in the tightest economic squeeze, faced with high-priced imports and protective walls rising in the industrial countries against their exports, their governments feel pressure to reduce their food subsidies and other services to the urban poor and to ignore the rural sector as long as it is politically quiescent. Such responses, although sometimes unavoidable for short-term financial survival, will inevitably bring disastrous consequences for poor people with virtually no margin of survival.

In the long run, whatever the difficulties of the moment, no

national development strategy is going to work unless it can effectively attack the roots of poverty and hunger. With increasing years of experience in the development process, developing-country leaders and planners are coming to realize this truth. It is becoming apparent to them that the brains and talents and energies of their own peoples are their greatest economic resource and that unlocking this resource and putting it productively to work is the central task of national development. Whether the development strategy that achieves this goal goes by the name of "basic human needs" or "new directions in development"—to cite two of the key phrases in recent U.S. policy

Investment in training and education speeds the creation of jobs. At the Instituto Superior de Agricultura in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic, the chicken coop is a classroom. Future agricultural experts learn the practical aspects of poultry production.

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pronouncements—it is the surest long-term road to national economic strength as well as to the conquest of hunger. Without such a strategy, no attack on hunger can achieve more than a superficial and temporary success.

4

World Hunger and U.S. Leadership

When the Presidential Commission on World Hunger recommended "that the United States make the elimination of hunger the primary focus of its relationships with the developing countries, beginning with the decade of the 1980s," we were well aware of the magnitude of the effort that such a commitment implies. Hunger, as we have seen, is closely linked with poverty; poverty, in turn, will remain for decades the central fact on the agenda of what has come to be called North-South relations. And the United States, in spite of the much-debated international troubles of recent years, is still the world leader not only in agriculture but in most aspects of international investment, technology and trade. Unquestionably, this country will remain the central actor in the industrial world's relations with

the developing countries through the 1980s and beyond. U.S. participation will be vital to the success of any larger economic undertaking of global scope, especially in the area of food and agriculture.

It is a sad fact that U.S. policy today does not adequately reflect either this country's leadership responsibilities in regard to the developing countries or the fundamental common interests that tie our destiny to theirs. These realities have been obscured by our national preoccupation with a whole new set of problems arising in the wake of the Vietnam war: the weakening of the dollar, the rise of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and the skyrocketing of energy prices, stagflation and unemployment—and, on top of all these problems, a perception that the strategic military balance might be tilting against us.

What has unfortunately not been sufficiently appreciated is that neither economic nor military security can be preserved by this country over the long term if there is no improvement in the economic and political position of the developing countries and in our relationship with them. At the foundation of that relationship is the common interest in overcoming poverty and hunger. Lacking a sufficient awareness of this reality, the United States has allowed its rate of official development assistance to drift gradually down to the all-time low of 0.20 percent of the gross national product (GNP)—almost the lowest share of the development effort carried by any of the industrial nations—and has given only sporadic attention to the building of mutually beneficial North-South trade. This is an abdication of leadership in one of the most strategically important sectors of U.S. foreign policy. There is little chance for major progress against world hunger until the United States again asserts a positive leadership role, and shows a greater willingness to incur short-term economic costs for the sake of future economic, political and social gains.

Balancing these adverse circumstances, however, I find many reasons for confidence, both on the international scene and here at home.

Action on the International Scene

Within the international community, awareness of hunger, food and agriculture problems is at a higher pitch today than in any previous period of history. This heightened concern is reflected both in international assistance programs and, most importantly, in the development priorities of the low-income nations themselves.

The convening of the World Food Conference following the severe world food shortage of 1973-74 gave a significant impetus to efforts to improve international means for attacking world hunger and malnutrition. The conference led to the creation of several important new institutions. Among these was a World Food Council to provide constant surveillance of the world food situation and to monitor progress toward the elimination of hunger. An International Fund for Agricultural Development was established to funnel new resources, both from the industrial North and from the OPEC countries, into new agricultural projects in the developing countries. Also established were a Global Information and Early Warning System to foresee crop failures early enough to mobilize food reserves and prevent famine; an international program to improve fertilizer supplies; and a small international emergency grain reserve.

Also since 1974, international institutions of longer standing, especially the World Bank, the regional development banks and the FAO, have stepped up their activities in support of food production and the relief of hunger in the developing countries. As a result, the international resources directly committed to food and agriculture doubled in real terms from $2.5 billion in 1973 to $5 billion in 1978. Moreover, donor institutions have become intent on seeing to it that these additional resources will actually benefit poor and hungry people.

Most important of all, the governments of developing countries began during the 1970s to attach a much higher priority than before to strengthening the food and agriculture sector of their economies and to improving the diets of their malnourished citizens. The World Bank, the largest source of external financ-

ing for agriculture, reports that its borrowers are increasingly seeking funds for nutrition projects, and are also giving more thought to nutritional needs in planning other types of development projects.

One encouraging evidence of this trend is the widespread adoption of the concept of national "food-sector strategies." In June 1979, the World Food Council, with a view to stimulating better development planning in the food sector, invited developing countries to prepare such strategies as part of their overall national development plans. By the summer of 1980, 32 developing countries had requested assistance in the preparation of food-sector strategies, and 15 of these had received firm offers of assistance. The major donors of foreign assistance, including the United States, have indicated their support for these endeavors.

In the area of food security, too, some important steps have been taken. There is substantial progress toward a more adequate level of U.S. grain reserves, and also toward the establishment of a worldwide system of nationally held grain reserves, of which the U.S. reserve would be a part. In addition, a small international grain reserve—500,000 tons—was established as a result of the Rome conference. In 1980 a new Food Aid Convention was negotiated with the purpose of stabilizing international food aid to developing countries at an annual level of 10 million tons, the target set at the Rome conference. In November 1980 the United States ratified this convention, thereby more than doubling the volume of food aid which this country guarantees to provide annually. Finally, as noted earlier, Congress has approved legislation creating a 4-million-ton Food Security Reserve to back up existing U.S. food aid commitments.

The international community has also begun to explore the short-term problem of feeding the poor, and of mobilizing more international support for this work. The World Food Council has suggested that a variety of carefully targeted consumer food subsidy programs be developed as interim measures, to be phased out within each country as food production and food distribution improve. The council estimates that to reach 100

million hungry people by the mid-1980s, food entitlement grants from the international community would be required on the order of $1 billion per year.

A great deal remains to be done to fulfill the aims of the Rome conference of 1974. But the limited actions already taken are modestly encouraging. There is a rising political awareness among governments that the problem of world hunger touches the vital interests of all nations, rich and poor alike, and that action to deal with it deserves a higher priority than it has yet received.

World Hunger and the American Public

Because of this country's key position in any attack on the problem of world hunger, and because of our representative system of government, understanding of this problem by the American people is uniquely important. One of the tasks of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger was to assess public attitudes and knowledge on this subject. Accordingly, we undertook two opinion surveys in March and December 1979.

Both surveys showed that most Americans *underestimate* the extent of world hunger—and *overestimate* the size of U.S. efforts to alleviate it, compared with the efforts of other developed countries. Yet, despite these misapprehensions, public attitudes on what the United States should do are strikingly affirmative. Eight out of ten Americans, according to these surveys, favor maintaining or even increasing what they believe to be the level of U.S. assistance to the world's hungry people. This support was expressed at a time of high anxiety over inflation, energy and other domestic problems—and by a public which, we also found, tends to react negatively to the term "foreign aid" and is, at best, unclear about the nature of development assistance. In short, most Americans perceive world hunger as offensive to their own deep-seated values, and they are prepared to support a considerably increased national effort to combat it. I believe many of our public officials, elected and otherwise, have failed to realize how strongly their own constituents feel about the issue of hunger.

These findings should come as no surprise. Humanitarianism and a sense of fairness are basic American values. And world hunger in particular has long been a major concern of U.S. church groups and civic organizations. Today, in fact, there is probably more organized U.S. citizen support for helping poor people in developing nations than at any time since just after World War II.

The polls also show, however, that the public's understanding of world hunger issues lags behind its expressed concern. Most citizens do not yet fully comprehend that building a world free of massive hunger means a strategic, many-sided, long-term campaign against poverty itself. In the course of such a campaign, Americans will have to adjust to a change in the international economic order whose future shape we cannot yet fully discern. I believe the nation will make the necessary adjustments and will prosper as a result. But a major job of education must be done if the public—even that fraction of the public that is attentive and active on such issues—is to understand the connection between hunger and poverty, and why the strategic attack on these twin evils is essential to the safeguarding of U.S. interests and values.

A Task for Political Leadership

Hunger has been a tragic part of the human landscape since ancient times. But only in our own time have most of the peoples of the world begun to believe that this need not be—that a better life is possible. Historically, the American example has had no small part in shaping that immense worldwide change in attitudes.

But if the possible is to be made actual—if hunger and poverty really are to be overcome—longstanding economic, social and political habits are going to have to change, both within and among nations. The developing nations themselves must make the greatest changes. Land reform, reallocation of human and financial resources, broader political enfranchisement, improvements in the status and opportunities open to women and to disadvantaged groups generally—some or all of these steps will

If hunger and poverty are to be overcome, the developing nations themselves must make the greatest changes. In some countries, women pull the plow (a Korean farm scene photographed in the '60s) . . .

be necessary in virtually all developing countries. All such steps demand political skill and courage—and economic adjustment on the part of some traditionally powerful groups.

Corresponding actions will be required of the developed countries as well, and these too will often require courage and political leadership. I have touched on some of the requirements: substantially increased development assistance more clearly focused on food and nutrition; more liberal trade policies and measures for adjustment assistance to affected domestic industries; agricultural policies formulated with a far more careful eye to their impact on hunger and poverty overseas; the creation of a viable

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. . . In others, bullocks do most of the heavy work (Hyderbad, India).

system of food reserves. Many of these essential actions are elaborated in greater detail in the full report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger.

When policy-makers face a challenge of such dimensions, the politically "safe" response may well be to do nothing—or to procrastinate, which is the same thing. One astute U.S. government official has put the case in these words: "The benefits of promoting economic and social adjustment are usually diffuse and delayed, while change-induced losses are often immediate and localized, and their victims well-identified and vocal. Buttressing the status quo is a historical and understandable governmental

response." Understandable—but tragically shortsighted. The immediate costs of adequate action on the problem of world hunger, though substantial, are low indeed compared to the benefits to be gained and the evils to be avoided, both now and in the long future. To teach that truth to the people is a main task of leadership.

The key to progress in implementing any national policy is not technical ingenuity or managerial competence, although these are certainly necessary. It is, rather, the willingness of governments, who hold the political power of decision, to give that policy goal—in this case the attack on world hunger—the high priority and steady effort it requires. Seen in this light, hunger is an essentially political problem. Such problems are sometimes pictured as "only a matter of political will," as if summoning up the political will of a great nation were an easy matter. Any negotiator knows that reconciling the claims of contending interests—especially when the common goal is long-range rather than immediate and obvious—is one of the most difficult of human occupations. That so much remains to be done in the vitally important cause of overcoming world hunger, therefore, should not be a cause for discouragement but rather a stimulus to further action and further efforts of persuasion in all the governments and societies involved—including especially our own United States.

Unfortunately, in our country, hunger is still too often seen as a "do-gooders' " cause, a fit goal for altruists but beyond the active concern of American policy-makers who must "live in the real world." While this view might once have been persuasive, it is very far from the truth today. Hunger is more than ever a cruel aspect of the real world—and not only for those who experience it in their own stomachs. Hunger is as real as refugees from the Caribbean, as turmoil in Iran, as threats of violent upheaval throughout Central America. Hunger is as real as the instability of people desperate to improve their lives.

If hunger is not merely a do-gooders' cause, neither is it a "lost cause"—at least not yet. On the contrary, I am more firmly persuaded than ever that it is a manageable one, and one to

which the American people are strongly committed. But accelerated action is required now in pursuit of this feasible and popular goal.

There is broad international agreement on the measures required to assure that people who are poor need not be hungry as well. Complementary steps, also well-recognized by development specialists, can gradually erode the poverty that permits hunger to endure. However, many of the most important of these measures can only be implemented through the political process. Hence, strong political pressures must be brought to bear in this country and the rest of the world. It is my fervent hope that the report of our Presidential Commission on World Hunger will help to spur the actions so urgently needed to build a world without hunger.

5
Six Priorities for U.S. Action

Throughout the work of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger, our focus was properly on the question: What can and must our own country, the United States, do about this world problem? We were well aware, as the report makes clear, that the most difficult actions will fall to the developing nations whose peoples are most directly affected. However, actions by the international community will make a crucial difference in the ability of developing-country governments to do what must be done; and of central importance will be actions of the United States.

The Commission's report includes 33 recommendations (see Appendix II) for U.S. policy. Our approach was comprehensive, touching on all the major dimensions of the problems of world hunger and poverty: trade and debt, corporate investment, food security, bilateral and multilateral aid, the separate but very im-

portant issue of hunger within the United States, and, finally, public education.

Clearly, such a comprehensive set of proposals could not possibly be implemented all at once, nor was it our expectation that they could be. Yet the problem is urgent and it is vitally important that the momentum of action be increased, for time is not on our side.

What, then, should the next steps be? What steps now, and in the years immediately ahead, are both necessary and possible for the United States? I would like to suggest six steps.

1. *A far greater proportion of U.S. development assistance funds must be specifically targeted to support programs that will alleviate hunger in countries that are clearly committed to this goal.*

There can be no single formula or strategy, no standard package of programs, that will assure every developing country's success in the struggle to conquer hunger—for the circumstances that create the problem vary enormously from one country to another. One priceless ingredient of success, however, is necessary in every case: The government, at the highest political level, must be sufficiently committed to this goal, and must demonstrate that commitment by effective action.

Whether a particular country's leadership wishes to commit itself to give high priority to overcoming hunger among its people is, of course, entirely its own business. What the United States can appropriately do, however—and in my judgment should do—is to make clear that its development assistance will be available primarily to countries where such a commitment exists, and will be targeted in support of programs that contribute substantially to its fulfillment.

The nature and extent of the programs we would assist under this policy would vary widely, depending primarily on the needs of the country in question and what its government is prepared to undertake. All measures to improve the diets and the incomes of the poor should be considered, whether or not they directly involve food.

Some governments may confine themselves, initially, to limited nutrition programs aimed at especially vulnerable groups, such

as pregnant women and young children, or designed to address particular nutritional deficiencies—the lack of Vitamin A, iron or iodine, for example—which cause specific diseases. Others may undertake major efforts to supply more of their own national or regional food requirements through expanded or more efficient agriculture or fisheries, or the building of national grain reserves. Some may need help in providing food subsidies for the poor. Still others will be ready to deal directly with the root problem of poverty—perhaps through programs to generate productive rural and urban employment or to provide subsistence farmers with the know-how, credit, and other necessities to enable them to produce cash crops for the market. Research and development—on what particular soils or fisheries can produce, or on what improvements can be made in local diets—should also qualify for support. These are all examples of important elements in the strategy that can overcome hunger. The United States can and should give special priority to the requests of governments that are willing to undertake such programs to meet demonstrable needs.

Targeting a high proportion of U.S. development assistance for such hunger-related programs would build on the philosophy of the "new directions" aid legislation enacted in recent years with its emphasis on basic human needs. It would, however, frankly conflict with some other aspects of recent U.S. aid policy, and both Congress and the Executive will have to consider carefully which emphasis is most likely to serve U.S. interests. For example, U.S. aid legislation excludes by name some countries deemed politically hostile—the current list includes Cuba, Vietnam, Angola and Mozambique. Realistically, political factors cannot be left out of account, but it can be legitimately asked whether U.S. interests are really served by refusing to help alleviate a nation's hunger and poverty because its government professes an ideology contrary to our own.

Also deserving of review is the current policy of confining U.S. development assistance essentially to the poorest countries. Some countries that have reached an intermediate stage of development still have massive problems of hunger and poverty which

At Jordan University, U.S.-aided laboratory work spurs Jordan Valley development.

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by Kay Chernush

they are very unlikely to solve without outside help; on the other hand, their stage of development enables them to make better use of additional funds, by mounting larger projects and operating them more effectively. In some cases the most appropriate help will be an easing of U.S. import restrictions on their manufactures or negotiation of commodity agreements to steady their export earnings; in other cases capital and technology are needed on terms not available commercially. A policy of abandoning development assistance as soon as a country rises above the "poorest" level would be a travesty of true development and a guarantee of failure in the campaign against poverty and hunger.

2. *To support an adequate U.S. effort against hunger and poverty,*

the long downward trend in U.S. development assistance must be promptly reversed.

In its study of world hunger the Commission consulted with leading development experts both in this country and abroad. We found them virtually unanimous that, even on the most optimistic assumptions, the present level of international development assistance will leave the world with as many hungry and malnourished people in 1990 as there are today. More likely, the number will be much higher. But if a move is to be made to increase the level of assistance from the industrial nations of the North, the world will inevitably look first and foremost to the United States. In 1979 all forms of U.S. economic assistance came to $4.7 billion, or a mere 0.20 percent of our GNP. By that measure, the U.S. performance ranks 15th among the 17 member nations of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) embracing Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Nearly half of the U.S. total went to Egypt, Israel and Portugal and other countries of strategic importance to U.S. policy; the rest of the developing world had to share the remainder.

Fortunately this deterioration in U.S. bilateral aid has been partly offset by the shift in priorities of the World Bank and other multilateral development institutions, whose rate of investment in food and agriculture rose sharply in the 1970s to a level of $5 billion a year. But if the flow of aid for agricultural development alone is to approach the $12 billion level now estimated to be necessary, either the multilateral banks or the major bilateral donors, or both, will have to expand their programs greatly. Either way, the source of the additional funds must be the nations with major financial resources. These include the United States and Japan, both of which have lagged far behind in their flow of assistance. The major oil-exporting countries should also be looked to for significantly increased aid, for although their recent aid level—over 2 percent of their GNP as a group—compares very favorably with that of the industrial West, some have amassed far greater financial resources than their own economies can absorb. Most observers believe that if

the United States would substantially increase its own development assistance, others could be persuaded to do likewise.

The amounts of money involved, to attain a goal of this magnitude and importance, are not extraordinarily large. The Commission endorsed 0.35 percent of GNP as an interim target for the United States, a level recently proposed by the DAC. That would mean roughly a doubling of the recent rate, or in 1979 dollars, an increase of about $5 billion a year. If half the $5 billion increase went for agricultural development, this would be a major U.S. contribution toward the recommended $7 billion worldwide increase in aid for that critical purpose.

Clearly, there will be debate as to whether the nation, in view of its economic difficulties and its military priorities, can afford such an increase. In that regard, these facts are revealing:

▶In GNP terms such an increased level would be only half of the 0.7 percent target adopted by the UN in 1970, which the United States then accepted in principle.

▶It compares with a 1979 rate of 0.94 percent for Sweden, 0.39 for Britain, 0.47 for Canada, 0.32 for West Germany.

▶It compares with a U.S. aid rate of 0.49 percent of GNP in the period 1965-67, when real per capita income in this country was substantially lower than it is today.

Money alone cannot solve the world's hunger problems, but without money they will certainly not be solved. And if the money is to be provided on the necessary scale, the United States, the world's richest nation and in recent years the most conspicuous laggard in development assistance, must do its part. Only then will this nation's commitment to the cause of ending world hunger and poverty command belief, and its leadership in the shaping of world development policies be reasserted.

3. *To provide against future crop failures, with the severe hardship these can bring to countries where hunger is already widespread, the U.S. farmer-owned grain reserve should be rapidly expanded.*

The farmer-owned reserve system was established by Congress in 1977, in a period of bumper crops and sagging prices. It was a highly constructive step but it did not go far enough. The authorized ceiling for the reserve is 19 million tons and only

about half that level has been reached. This is not a safe margin against the hazards of world agriculture.

The Presidential Commission on World Hunger recommended an immediate increase in the authorized level of the farmer-owned reserve to 30 million tons, with production policies adjusted by the Agriculture Department to assure that stocks actually reach that level. Some increase in the prices at which reserves are released for the market will also be necessary to protect farm incomes and prevent premature depletion of the reserve.

This reserve problem is urgent. Nobody can foresee how soon another bad crop year may push world wheat prices beyond the reach of the poorest grain-importing countries, confronting them with severe hardship if not actual famine for many of their citizens. This is precisely what happened in 1973-74. Some improvement should now flow from the action of Congress in December 1980, creating a national Food Security Reserve of 4 million tons of wheat to back up our food aid programs. But the potential for disaster is on a far larger scale. Only a greatly enlarged U.S. grain reserve, in conjunction with the establishment of more modest reserves within some of the developing nations themselves, can protect the world—and especially its poorest people—against a repetition of the disaster of 1973-74.

4. *Since job-creating export industries in developing countries are an essential means to escape poverty and hunger, and since these industries frequently offer severe import competition to existing U.S. firms, a more effective system of "adjustment assistance" to affected U.S. industries is urgently needed.*

Many developing countries are rapidly acquiring a comparative advantage over the United States and other high-wage industrial countries in a wide variety of light manufactures. These labor-intensive industries are precisely what their economies need to create the jobs that can raise their unemployed and underemployed citizens above poverty and hunger. Their natural markets are in the industrial North, where they are already offering stiff competition to U.S. textile, shoe, electronic and other manufacturers.

This historic shift need *not* threaten the United States. The United States will remain a prosperous—indeed, history's most prosperous—industrial nation as long as we retain our capacity for innovation and for pioneering in such high-technology industries as computers, communications, aerospace engineering, chemicals and biogenetics, to name a few. But the name of this game is adjustment, not protection. And in times of economic stress the pain of adjustment in affected industries is real.

To meet this problem, Congress has long since enacted adjustment assistance legislation to ease the transition for companies and their employees affected by import competition. This wise policy has somewhat reduced the otherwise inevitable pressure on Congress for protection against imports—an approach which would severely damage the developing-country exporters without really solving our own problem. However, the present program of adjustment assistance has proved inadequate in many respects. A new bill, known as the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 1979, has been under consideration in Congress. It repairs the major defects in the present program, providing for increased retraining, loans and relocation benefits and for industry-wide adjustment planning.

Unfortunately, the bill did not pass the Senate in 1980 and will have to start over again in the new Congress in 1981. It should be passed promptly. It is an important and urgent step to assure that the burden of the U.S. effort against poverty and hunger in the developing world does not fall disproportionately on Americans who work in vulnerable industries.

5. *To assure the necessary emphasis on the battle against hunger as a strategic objective of U.S. policy, a presidential advisory council on world hunger should be established.*

One of the important insights developed by the studies of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger is the fact that in all the multifarious activities of the U.S. government bearing on this problem, there is no clear sense of strategic priority for the goal of reducing hunger and malnutrition. For example, the Commission's report observes that the official priority of the Agency for International Development (AID), as stated in a re-

cent policy paper on agriculture, "is still agricultural development, rather than the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition." Again, the report notes that despite new emphasis on nutrition in AID's recent programming for some regions, "the alleviation of hunger is usually seen in project-oriented terms, rather than as a major strategic goal." The same lack of clear focus can be seen in other programs, notably Food for Peace, and in the conduct of scientific research. In fact, the Commission reported, "responsibility for food aid programs is so scattered [among departments and agencies] that planning is weak, action is uncertain, criteria are vague, evaluation is difficult and financial responsibility is unclear."

One important step toward coordination in this field was taken in 1979 with the creation of the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA). Its function is to provide more coherent and authoritative guidance throughout the U.S. government on international development matters. The creation of IDCA has enabled those charged with development responsibilities to speak with a louder voice in the councils of government. To that extent it is bound to play an important role in U.S. efforts to overcome hunger, which is fundamentally a development issue and must never be isolated from other aspects of the development process.

However, this country is still a long way from having made the elimination of hunger "the primary focus of its relationships with the developing countries," as the Commission urged in its central recommendation. To give this basic and long-term goal the centrality it should have in U.S. foreign policy—to assure that the needs of the world's malnourished poor do not get shunted aside in the face of competing objectives espoused by more powerful constituencies—the attack on world hunger must for some time to come have its own advocate within the governmental structure. For that purpose there should be appointed a continuing presidential advisory council on world hunger. It would be instructed to study and monitor the full range of world hunger problems and U.S. programs, both domestic and international, that relate to them; to advise the President in this field;

and to make such recommendations as it considers useful on both the substance and the administration of U.S. policies and programs that have a bearing on world hunger. To assure a high level of representation and an ability to make itself heard, the members of the council should be appointed by the President, and should make an annual report to the President and the Congress.

6. *To strengthen and amplify the vitally important informational and educational work being carried on in the private sector concerning world hunger and the U.S. role in combating it, a small "world hunger education fund" should be established within the government.*

In our democracy, no national policy can be launched or sustained without public consent based on public understanding. Although American public opinion overwhelmingly supports U.S. efforts to combat world hunger, the nature and extent of the problem is not well understood. Important educational work is done by expert nonprofit groups specializing in foreign policy and international development, by some private foundations, and by numerous religious organizations and other groups involved in humanitarian relief work. Within the government, some valuable supporting work on development issues is done by Action (which now includes the Peace Corps and Vista), by AID, and by the international program division of the Department of Education.

For the most part, however, these efforts have a very limited reach. They do not begin to reach even the more attentive members of the public who follow world affairs and exert an influence on the climate of opinion in which policy decisions are made. Their impact on school and college curricula is slight. The result is that, to a great extent, the question of how the United States should respond to the challenge of world hunger is being confronted by the U.S. government in a near-vacuum of public opinion and public knowledge. The creation and report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger may have made a temporary contribution toward filling the vacuum; but the need for a sustained educational effort on this vitally important subject is great.

Clearly, most of the needed effort must be made by the news media, the schools and colleges, the nonprofit organizations and, it is to be hoped, the major business and labor organizations. But government must play a focal role. Much of the relevant knowledge and expertise is concentrated in government departments and agencies. An information and education unit within the government, dedicated to serving the private sector's needs by organizing and disseminating this expert knowledge in clear and comprehensible layman's language and graphic materials, would enormously improve both the quantity and quality of public knowledge on this neglected subject.

To make this possible, the Presidential Commission on World Hunger recommended that "the Congress provide funds to establish an organization to educate and inform the American public about world hunger." It would begin with about $5 million in seed money from the government, but most of its budget thereafter—perhaps rising to $20 million—should preferably be raised from the private sector. In addition to disseminating information on government policy in this field, it should have authority to make small grants to private organizations for educational work, especially in the schools, where a great need exists for high-quality materials on world food problems.

I strongly endorse this recommendation of the Presidential Commission. I am well aware that Congress has shown reluctance over the years to authorize government agencies to do much public information work, lest they "propagandize" the American public. I have no such fear. Our open society has demonstrated a most impressive resistance to any attempts, especially by government, to manipulate public opinion. It may be relevant to note that Britain, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden all have governmentally supported public education programs on the problems of developing countries. If a U.S. program of this kind spent as much in proportion to population as Denmark does, its budget would be $27 million; if as much as the Netherlands, $90 million. The United States has no more reason than they to worry about such a program misleading the people. Far more worrisome is the fact that far-reaching policy

decisions are now being made on a subject about which the public is uninformed.

The proposed education fund would go far to assure that schools, colleges and private institutions that are performing, or would like to perform, a service of public education on world hunger can receive reasonable informational support from their government. Once they are properly informed, I am confident that the people will understand the need for a sustained national effort, such as I have outlined, whose goal is one that Americans overwhelmingly support: at long last to free future generations of mankind from the scourge of hunger.

* * *

Appendix I

MEMBERSHIP OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON WORLD HUNGER, 1978-80

Chairman:

SOL M. LINOWITZ: Lawyer, former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States; co-negotiator, Panama Canal treaties

Vice-Chairmen:

JEAN MAYER: President, Tufts University; formerly professor of nutrition, Harvard University

STEVEN MULLER: Political scientist; president, The Johns Hopkins University

NORMAN E. BORLAUG: Agricultural scientist; director of wheat research at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, Mexico City

DAVID W. BROOKS: Former leading executive of cotton growers' associations

HARRY F. CHAPIN: Founding trustee of World Hunger Year; songwriter

JOHN DENVER: Singer and songwriter; producer of *I Want to Live*, a documentary film on world hunger

ROBERT DOLE: U.S. Senator from Kansas; member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and its Subcommittee on Nutrition

WALTER P. FALCON: Economist; director, Food Research Institute, Stanford University

ORVILLE FREEMAN: President and chief executive of Business International Corporation; former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

BENJAMIN GILMAN: U.S. Representative from New York (26th District); member of House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Economic Policy and Trade

PATRICK LEAHY: U.S. Senator from Vermont; member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and chairman of its Subcommittee on Rural Development

BESS MYERSON: Consumer consultant and columnist; former commissioner of consumer affairs, City of New York

RICHARD NOLAN: U.S. Representative from Minnesota (6th District); member of the House Committee on Agriculture and chairman of its subcommittee on family farms and rural development

HOWARD A. SCHNEIDER: Professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina, Raleigh-Durham

ADELE SMITH SIMMONS: President, Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts

RAYMOND SINGLETARY, JR.: President of Blakely Peanut Company, Blakely, Georgia

EUGENE L. STOCKWELL: Associate general secretary of the National Council of Churches

CLIFTON R. WHARTON, JR.: Chancellor, State University of New York; agricultural economist

THOMAS H. WYMAN: Vice-chairman of Pillsbury Company

Appendix II

RECOMMENDATIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON WORLD HUNGER*

Major Recommendation

The Commission recommends that the United States make the elimination of hunger the primary focus of its relationships with the developing countries, beginning with the decade of the 1980s.

U.S. Efforts to Improve the International Economic Setting for Combating Hunger

Trade and Debt

The Commission recommends that:

The United States support continuing international efforts to create price-stabilizing agreements for those commodities of particular interest to the developing nations. In particular, this country should be prepared to accept an equitable share of the costs of maintaining buffer stocks which might be required by the agreements and should adopt an affirmative attitude toward the producer's price concerns;

The United States press for an early reopening of multilateral trade negotiations, under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, with a view toward seeking further reductions in tariffs against manufactured goods, especially those labor-intensive products of most interest to the developing nations;

The extension of Generalized System of Preferences privileges be put on a sounder footing by extending such benefits on a fixed-term, multi-year basis; the Commission further recommends that the present list of eligible products be expanded to the maximum extent possible under existing Executive authority;

The United States take an active role in the continuing General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations aimed at limiting the conditions under which quantitative restrictions may be im-

*This material is quoted from "Overcoming World Hunger: The Challenge Ahead," the Abridged Version of the Report of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger.

posed against another country's exports; the Commission further recommends that this country move, in upcoming negotiations, to ease any such limitations to which it is a party; finally, the Commission recommends that the Congress and Administration act to forestall domestic pressure for such limitations by extending specially targeted trade adjustment assistance programs to industries and localities particularly hard hit by new influxes of imports;

The Senate speedily approve, and the Administration support, HR 1543, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 1979, without weakening amendments. The Commission also recommends that the Congress appropriate the funds necessary for full implementation of the act and urges the Department of Labor and the various state governments to take those steps necessary to assure prompt and efficient delivery of benefits and services provided for under the act;

The U.S. Trade Representative press for inclusion of a code of minimum labor standards within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which would provide an appropriate forum for discussion and resolution of disputes; the Commission further recommends that the International Labor Organization be designated as the fact-finding agency for disputes coming under terms of the code;

The authority granted the President under existing legislation to allow the least developed countries to place amounts owed this government into local currency accounts for development purposes be extended to apply to all non-oil developing nations; the Commission further urgently recommends that the Congress appropriate the necessary funds to make implementation of these provisions possible;

The Congress eliminate restrictions which limit the President's authority to provide development assistance to the "relatively least developed" nations on a grant basis; the Commission further recommends that the President use existing legislative authority to increase the proportion of aid provided as grants, consistent with maximizing the development impact of available resources; and,

The Congress, in connection with the bill to increase the U.S. quota in the International Monetary Fund, adopt provisions instructing the U.S. representative to the Fund to use his/her influence and authority to safeguard the basic human needs of the

poorest people in the borrowing nations. In particular, the Commission supports the amendment to that effect which has been offered by the chairman of the House Banking Committee.

Corporate Involvement

The Commission recommends that:

Nonprofit foundations, in cooperation with the private sector and representatives of developing countries, establish a nongovernmental clearinghouse to encourage mutually beneficial collaboration between developing countries and U.S. investors, particularly small firms, in the food and agriculture sector;

The United States fully support current UN efforts to prescribe standards for investment on the part of international corporations in developing countries, and that U.S. representatives insure that these standards include balanced requirements for both the corporate investor and the developing country. Congress should consider adopting appropriate sections of the proposed UN code of conduct as U.S. law;

The President call a meeting of major corporate and agribusiness leaders to personally encourage such industry representatives to provide their own views to the President and the public on international corporate investment in developing countries, with particular emphasis on corporate responsibility and action in the elimination of world hunger; and,

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the FAO take additional steps to increase the flow of public information dealing with food supply and demand conditions of both an emergency and commercial nature.

World Food Security

The Commission recommends:

The United States press for an early resolution of issues impeding the establishment of a global system of reserves, and support the efforts of developing countries which might wish to create their own reserves;

The maximum stocking level of the U.S. farmer-owned reserve be increased to 30 million tons of wheat and that the price at which farmers are allowed to sell their reserve holdings be set at a level to preserve the reserve for major international emergencies and to assure farmers an equitable return on their labor and investment;

The United States establish a government-held reserve to support PL 480 commitments; and,

U.S. farm policy be directed toward enhancing farm structure whereby producers operating small- and medium-size, economically productive farms will be assured an equitable return on their labor and investment comparable to returns to other sectors of the economy, and that the Department of Agriculture put greater emphasis upon the conservation of soil and water resources, particularly during periods when maximum productivity is a goal, for the purpose of assuring a strong agricultural system.

U.S. Efforts to Combat Hunger through Development Assistance

The Commission recommends that:

The IDCA be significantly strengthened and that its director be accorded Cabinet-level status, so that the objectives of ending hunger and providing equitable economic development can be more effectively integrated into U.S. foreign policy and planning;

The United States move as rapidly as possible toward the UN's goal of 0.7 percent of gross national product as this nation's net disbursement of concessional economic assistance. Appropriations for this purpose should be made available on a multi-year basis, independent of security supporting assistance, and "untied" from narrow domestic economic interests;

U.S. development assistance be targeted selectively at poor nations strongly committed to meeting basic human needs and rights, as determined by the application of existing effectiveness criteria;

AID strengthen its own agricultural and managerial competence while simultaneously expanding its reliance on appropriate intermediary organizations for the design and delivery of technical assistance. The Commission further recommends that AID give far more attention to nutrition as an integrating theme for its program activities in agriculture, health care, education and family planning;

Federal, state and university funding be increased for internationally oriented research on food and nutrition, and accompanied by a corresponding commitment to redirect U.S. scientific

talent toward the food and development problems of the developing countries through programs designed to help create or strengthen indigenous agriculture and research institutions in those countries;

The United States should support agrarian reforms both directly and indirectly through bilateral and multilateral food and development assistance programs. It should also support a multilateral institution or arrangement that would provide capital and technical assistance to facilitate changes in inequitable land tenure patterns;

IDCA and AID should give increased emphasis to integrated policies and programs to improve the employment and income earning opportunities of the poor, starting with, but not limited to, the food supply sector. The Commission further recommends that the Congress, in legislation, and IDCA, through appropriate policy directives, give explicit recognition to the development and dissemination of capital-saving technologies as an important program area;

The United States continue to support changes within World Bank practices that facilitate the meeting of basic needs, encourage sensitivity to structural concerns and increase the U.S. contribution to the bank's supply of capital for concessional loans to the neediest nations;

The United States give far higher priority within its overall development assistance efforts to implementing requests for help in planning, financing and carrying out nutrition interventions designed to meet the chosen nutritional targets of individual nations;

Congress undertake a complete revision of the PL 480 Food for Peace program—to enable the program to accord more closely with the "new directions" approach to development assistance; and,

The United States strengthen its professional and financial inputs to selected UN programs and agencies with proven effectiveness in efforts to alleviate malnutrition, hunger and poverty.

Domestic Hunger and Malnutrition: Overcoming Hunger at Home

The Commission recommends that:

The U.S. government undertake a systematic effort to assess the nutritional status of American citizens, and that the President direct the Secretary of HEW* to immediately establish a National Nutrition Surveillance Program to coordinate nutrition surveillance activities with other departments and agencies involved in nutrition programs; and that health care legislation provide greater emphasis upon preventive measures like nutrition that would appear to be more cost saving than the current approach to deal with the after-the-fact treatment and recovery;

The Administration and the Congress act to remove the expenditure limit on Federal funding for food stamps, to increase resources for all domestic feeding programs which have a demonstrated record of success, and to improve outreach efforts and certification procedures to increase participation among eligible citizens, with special attention to utilizing the resources of local private voluntary organizations; and,

The President and the Congress adopt a national policy of economic development, designed to foster balanced growth and full employment along lines which best utilize the resources and skills of this country, and that implementation of such a policy should include a requirement that the President, in his annual economic message, specify growth, employment, and sectoral investment goals for the following year and the administrative and legislative means proposed to achieve those goals.

The Need for Public Education

The Commission recommends that:

The Congress provide funds to establish an organization to educate and inform the American public about world hunger.

*Now *Health and Human Services*

Talking It Over

A Note for Students and Discussion Groups

This pamphlet, like its predecessors in the HEADLINE Series, is published for every serious reader, specialized or not, who takes an interest in the subject. Many of our readers will be in classrooms, seminars or community discussion groups. Particularly with them in mind, we present below some discussion questions—suggested as a starting point only—and references for further reading.

Discussion Questions

Some say the worldwide problem of hunger and malnutrition can be overcome only by a broad and costly attack on its underlying cause, poverty. Others insist much can be done at far less cost to bring more and better food to the poor, even though other aspects of poverty remain. Are these two approaches mutually exclusive? Which one deserves the main emphasis, in your opinion?

In many developing countries, most of the benefits of development, including adequate food, do not reach the poor. In your view, would it be wise or unwise for U.S. aid and trade cooperation to be withheld from governments that, in Washington's judgment, don't do enough for their own poorest citizens?

Some critics say the "basic human needs" approach to U.S. development assistance neglects the vital—but costly—development of industry as well as infrastructure needs such as education, transportation and energy, without which hunger and poverty cannot be overcome. Others insist that unless aid goes

directly to the poor it doesn't help them at all and only adds to the power and wealth of the ruling minority. What is your view?

Most U.S. food exports go to LDCs. Food for Peace shipments have been partly aimed at further developing this market. What are the advantages and disadvantages of LDC dependence on imported food, in your opinion?

Rapid population growth in many countries is a significant factor in the problem of hunger and poverty, so much so that authorities such as demographer Phyllis T. Piotrow believe family planning must be "an integral part" of the development process. Would you favor or oppose a policy of giving preference in U.S. aid programs to countries whose family planning policies Washington considers effective?

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Boulding, Elise, "Women: The Fifth World." HEADLINE Series 248. New York, Foreign Policy Association, February 1980. A leading sociologist argues that neglect of woman's role flaws LDC development.

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———, *Losing Ground: Environmental Stress and World Food Prospects.* New York, W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1976 (paper). A Worldwatch Institute scholar warns of the worldwide loss of croplands through diversion to other uses and through erosion and desertification; also of destruction of fisheries through pollution and coastal development. Bibliographical notes and index.

The Global 2000 Report to the President: Entering the Twenty-First Century. Vol. 1. Washington, D.C., USGPO, 1980. First of a three-volume report prepared by the Council on Environmental Quality (a White House agency) and the Department of State. Widely publicized. Projects recent world trends in population, economic growth, food and resource production, consumption and reserves, environmental deterioration, etc., to indicate what the world could be like in 2000. " . . . The problems of preserving the carrying capacity of the earth and sustaining the possibility of a decent life . . . are enormous and close upon us."

Gordon, Lincoln, *Growth Policies and the International Order.* 1980s Project/Council on Foreign Relations. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1979 (paper). An authority on international economic relations explores transnational issues in industry, agriculture, energy, etc. An excellent statement of the political context within which world food issues must be addressed.

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Sommer, John G., *Beyond Charity: U.S. Voluntary Aid for a Changing Third World*. Washington, D.C., Overseas Development Council, 1977 (paper). A survey of the impressive work of U.S. voluntary agencies in the developing countries, which the author hopes will further increase. Food and agriculture are prominent among the sectors in which agencies are active. Statistical tables.

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———, *World Development Report, 1980*. New York, Oxford University Press for the World Bank, August 1980 (paper). Latest in an annual series begun in 1978. About half of the book deals with issues of "poverty and human development," including food, nutrition and rural life—an increasing World Bank priority in recent years. Well written; many charts and graphs.

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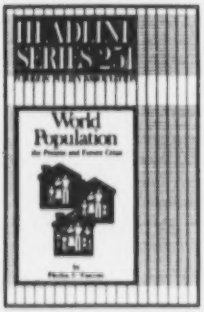

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Women: The Fifth World
by Elise Boulding (HS 248, February 1980)

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